(b) the initial cost of the project;

(c) the details of private sector/multinational who joined with State Government in respective years and the equity participation thereof; and

(d) the latest position, cost of Haldia Petrochemical complex and PFI's contribution, State Government contribution and promoter's contribution?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be placed on the Table of the House.

[Translation]

Threat of Earthquake

3116. SHRI MANIBHAI RAMJIBHAI CHAUDHARI : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to sate:

(a) whether threat of earthquake has been increasing in various parts of the country;

(b) the steps taken or being taken to prevent the threat of earthquake; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) Occurrence of earthquake is random in nature and there is no clear indication of any increase or decrease or occurrence of earthquakes in different parts of the country.

(b) and (c) Prediction of earthquakes with reasonable degree of accuracy and on a scientific basis with regard to space, time and magnitude has not so far become possible. There is also no proven methodology for preventing occurrence of earthquakes. Government is trying to minimise the extent of damage and destruction by popularising earthquake resistant construction practices and through community education programmes.

Veterinary Hospitals

3117. SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria laid down for opening veterinary hospitals and breeding centres in the country and the number of cattle prescribed for a village;

(b) the details of veterinary hospitals and breeding centres in the country;

(c) whether the Government have provided any financial assistance for setting up of veterinary hospitals and breeding centres in the National Capital Territory of Delhi during the last three years;

(d) if so, the details thereof, year-wise;

(e) whether there is any proposal to increase the number of veterinary hospitals and breeding centres in the country; and

(f) if so, the details thereof, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) to (f) The information is being gathered from the States and Union Territory Governments and will be placed on the Table of the House.

[English]

Permission to Corporate Sector in Agriculture

3118. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Corporate agriculture comes to town" appearing in the 'Business Standard', New Delhi dated July 14, 1997;

(b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein;

(c) the interested companies working on the schemes would permit them to bring upward of 200 acres of land each;

(d) the expected funding of these projects by the World Bank; and

(e) the broad features of these projects for agricultural production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) No information on the subject is available in the Ministry of Agriculture.

Welfare of Blinds

3119. SHRI T. GOVINDAN : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have provided sufficient grants to all the institutions who applied for the welfare of blind persons during 1996-97;

(b) if so, the amount sanctioned and number of institutions benefited, State-wise; and

(c) if not, the reason therefor?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA) : (a) The Central Govt. have provided grants according to norms approved under the existing schemes to these non-Governmental Organisations whose proposals were recommended by the concerned State Govt. favourably and were found in order amongst organisations that have been receiving grant from this Ministry.

(b) The position is given in the attached Statement.

(c) Does not arise.

Statement

Sl. No.	State/UT	No. of NGOs	Total Grant (Rs. in Lakh)
1.	Andhra Pradesh	4	17.64
2.	Kerala	1	16.41
3.	Delhi	9	65.65
4.	Bihar	3	14.70
5.	Haryana	1	4.68
6.	Punjab	1	3.28
7.	Karnataka	8	42.15
8.	Maharashtra	4	16.10
9.	Meghalaya	1	3.69
10.	Tamil Nadu	6	32.43
11.	U.P	7	32.55
12.	West Bengal	4	20.46
13.	Gujarat	3	14.10

Degradation of Elephants

3120. SHRI UDDHAB BARMAN : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the consequences of the recent degrading of African elephants from Schedule A to Schedule B; and

(b) the action taken or proposed to be taken to protect the Indian elephants from degradation?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) The African elephant is not listed in the Schedules of Indian Wildlife protection Act, 1972. However, it is listed in Appendix-I of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), to which India is a party. On the requests of three African elephant range countries, namely, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe, which received 2/3rd majority approval in the Tenth Conference of the Parties to CITES, held in June 1997 at Harare, the populations of African elephants in these countries have been approved for downlisting from Appendix-I to Appendix-II of the CITES with a moratorium of 18 months. These three countries can enter into trade in African elephants and elephant products only to Japan after the Standing Committee of CITES have satisfied themselves that the conditions set out for such downlisting have been fulfilled.

(b) In order to protect the Indian elephant from the possible increased activities of ivory poachers and smugglers the State Governments of the elephant range States have been put on the alert by the Central Government.

Research on Development of Hybrid Rice

3121. SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Agricultural Research Institute has made any research on the development of hybrid rice;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of areas in which they are grown and their impact on increasing the rice production in those areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) Yes, Sir, the Indian Agricultural Research Institute has been working on the development of hybrid rice varieties.

(b) The Institute has developed four Basmati rice hybrids and seven non-Basmati rice hybrid which are under trial in the National Testing Programme. After further testing for 2-3 years some of these hybrids may be released for general cultivation.

(c) Question does not arise.

False Case by Delhi Police

3122. SHRI SOUMYA RANJAN : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the newsitem captioned "Cops sentenced for